5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

571 861 siblings, half-siblings, and ortho-cousins of close agnatic kinship from the same joint family or sublineage group. The composition of a children's group depends upon various factors. The most important of these are the following:

561 857 *Age and mobility.* Infants still requiring care are often carried about by boys and girls attached to a group of older children. Generally speaking, children of the same degree of mobility tend to go about together. Thus one often finds a group comprising children of about 6 to 10 years. But the stage of social development reached by a child is important in this connexion. Hence young children under 10–11, children between 10–11 and the beginning of pubescence, and adolescents all tend to form separate groups.

571 857 462 *Sex.* Before the age of about 6 years small boys very frequently go about with girls' groups, and small girls, though more rarely, accompany older brothers. After that age as mobility increases and interests diverge the sexes tend to separate. A well-defined sexual dichotomy runs through Tale social life and thought, and the children begin to adopt the cultural definitions of the roles of the sexes in relation to each other about the time that single-sex groups become common. This is associated with a differentiation of their activities on the periphery of the economic system. Thus cowherds are always boys, whereas it is the girls who help with the housekeeping.

571 857 *The social situation.* Yet none of these children's groups resemble gangs. They have no permanent structure. They generally crystallize out in particular situations and the composition of a group depends largely upon the situation. In ritual situations one often finds a somewhat amorphous group of children and young people of a wide age-range. In games and imaginative play, however, it is more usual to meet with small groups of restricted age-range. Pairs and trios of either sex and of nearly the same age, who are almost always siblings or ortho-cousins, often have a more lasting companionship in work and play and provide a nucleus for larger temporary groups, especially in the dry season.

593 861 858 The most fundamental educational relationship of the Tallensi is, however, not that of children to children but of children to parents. It is a complex relationship, as defined in Tale culture, but its principal moments can be readily discerned. On the plane of rational, everyday

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

economic and social activities there is co-operation, friendliness and tolerance, almost equality. This is more marked between father and child than between mother and child. A father is always addressed by his personal name, a mother is always called *mma*, my mother. Affectively, however, a powerful tension exists between parent and child. A parent's authority may not be flouted, though he or she is expected to be affectionate and indulgent. Sin, in Tale ideology, is primarily an offence against the person, status, or rights of the living parents, or the parent-images—the ancestor spirits.

The structure of this relationship makes it possible for children to acquiesce immediately in the commands and teachings of their parents or parent-substitutes. Children are, as a rule, very obedient. If they refuse to carry out an order there is usually some very valid reason—acknowledged as such by both parents and children—such as that it is some one else's turn. But the parent-child relationship is educationally fundamental in another sense—it is the paradigm of all moral relationships.

It is worth noting, by contrast, that the relationship between grandparent and grandchild is the reverse of that between parent and child. In this case equality, compatibility and partisanship, as if in league against the generation between them, are emphasized, more particularly by the joking relationship—mutual ragging among the Tallensi—permitted between grandparent and grandchild.

The social space. How these relationships function in the educational development of a Tale child is determined by its social space.[1] An individual's social space is a product of that segment of the social structure and that segment of the habitat with which he or she is in effective contact. To put it in another way, the social space is the society in its ecological setting seen from the individual's point of view. The individual creates his social space but is himself in turn formed by it. On the one hand, his range of experiences and behaviour are controlled by his social space; and on the other, everything he learns causes it to expand and become more differentiated. In the lifetime of the individual it changes *pari passu* with his psycho-physical and social development.

[1] This term is employed here for want of an apter one. It has been used in a different sense by Simmel and others.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

which Tale children develop in the course of their education. I have tried to indicate only some typical interests and their relation to the educational process.

Skills. The acquisition of skills also commences in early infancy, with the child's first experiments in motor co-ordination and speech. Bodily dexterity provides merely the foundation upon which are subsequently built up the socially important skills of adult life. They include not only the predominantly manual skills, such as are connected with farming and care of live stock, with hunting, fishing, building, thatching, cooking, housekeeping and gardening, and the technology of specialists, but also non-manual skills, such as a knowledge of the kinship system, of ritual and ceremonial, of economically useful herbs and roots and of others used as drugs to cure illness, of buying and selling, of law and custom—in short, of the whole body of cultural definitions which guide the Talənɑ in his daily existence. Such skills are the end-results of education; and it will be obvious that they represent merely the cognitive and motor aspects of activities rooted in developing interests and fostered by the expectation of normal behaviour. Typical skills will be referred to as we proceed, but one general feature must be noted here. Children in Taleland are remarkably free from over-solicitious supervision. They have the maximum freedom and responsibility commensurate with their skill and maturity. On the one hand they can go where they like and do what they like, on the other they are held fully responsible for tasks entrusted to them. Thus, a 6-year-old is quite often charged with the care of an infant for several hours at a stretch. Girls of 9 or 10 can be seen in large numbers in every market, selling or buying things for their mothers or themselves. Boys of this age and even younger swarm in the markets. One market day I discovered a boy of about 10–11 selling a basketful of leaves used as a food for animals which he had himself collected in the bush near his settlement. He hoped to earn a penny or twopence to buy arrow-heads for himself. Another day a boy of about the same age offered his services to the butcher. He earned a tenth of a penny which he spent on a feed of locust-bean flour for himself and a friend. Similarly, when there is dancing at a homestead, the children of about 6 years and upwards from the whole neighbourhood congregate there and remain till

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

dawn. They might tell their parents where they are going, but would not be sent for to come home.

Numerous instances could be added to illustrate further the freedom allowed to children. Of the responsibility allotted to them in applying their skills and their appreciation of it, one good example may be quoted. I was chatting with a group of boys, aged about 7–11 years, at sunset one day, when Duunbil, the oldest of them, suddenly exclaimed, clasping his hands in a gesture expressing both amusement and consternation: 'Ma! I've forgotten to untie the goats; I'll get a whipping.' 'You'd better run,' one of the others advised, as he dashed away. His companions explained that he had pegged his father's goats out in the morning to graze and that it was his duty to bring them home again. Goats cannot be left out all night lest hyenas catch them. A few days later I met Duunbil again and he told me, with a grin, that he had not managed to bring the goats in till after dark, but that he had been let off with a mild beating.

Children and adolescents share economic tasks in accordance with their skill and maturity, and they have a strong sense of the rights to which they are entitled in consequence. An adolescent has the right to be adequately fed and supported by his or her parents in return for co-operation in agricultural or domestic work. I have known of youths running away from home when they considered themselves to be badly treated in these respects. Children expect to have their services acknowledged in a similar way. Yindəl, aged about 11, an intelligent and enterprising lad, was already giving his father valuable assistance, both in the care of live stock and in farming. When the great dances came round, Yindəl wanted a new loin cloth. His father refused to buy him one, whereupon Yindəl went on strike, neglected the chickens, the donkeys, the goats and refused to go to the bush farm even after a beating. In the end his father had to yield. *Bii la mar buurt*—'The boy has justice on his side'—he said, when he told me the story.

A similar incident occurred with a man who supplied us with milk for a short while. Money is scarce in Taleland and 2*s.* 6*d.* a month is an enviable addition to family resources. Yet one day he came to tell me apologetically that he could no longer sell me milk. Why? His small son, whose job it was to herd the cow, had rebelled. He

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

used always to milk the cow during the day, in the pasture, when he became hungry; but if he was not going to be allowed to do this because the white man must be supplied with milk, he would no longer drive the cow out to graze.

Increasing skill and maturity, therefore, bring increasing responsibilities but also concomitant rewards—that is, ever closer integration into the system of co-operation and reciprocity which is the basis of Tale domestic economy.[1] The unity of the social sphere, the interest of children in the world of adult activities, and the rapidity with which each advance in educational achievement is socially utilized constitute a ring of incentives which help to explain the eagerness of Tale children to grow up and take their full place in adult life.

Observances. Finally, there are the observances which every Talənɔ has to learn in the course of his or her life. These comprise ritual, moral and ethical values, norms and obligations, as well as rules of etiquette and standards of correct conduct in general. Some of these types of observances can be readily identified in Tale culture. It is not so easy to determine what exactly are moral and ethical norms and obligations and their place in this culture. Certainly an exhaustive study of this, the most recondite and perhaps fundamental aspect of Tale education, could not be ventured without first precisely establishing the nature of these observances and how they are maintained. For the limited purpose of this paper it will be sufficient to select some representative examples of rules of conduct the violation or neglect of which is repugnant to the cultural idiom of the Tallensi or, otherwise expressed, would be considered blameworthy or disgraceful, sinful or wicked, uncouth or embarrassing to others. To ask how they are learnt is to ask how they are experienced by the growing child at different stages of its development.

To the native these norms have an arbitrary quality as if they require no validation, other than the fact that normal and equable social relations would be impossible without them, that they are indispensable for satisfactory social adjustment.[2] In Taleland, it is true, learn-

[1] See M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', loc. cit., for a more detailed description of this.

[2] The argument of this section owes much to the stimulus of Durkheim's *L'Éducation morale.*